

## *2005 Small Business Awards*

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### *Small Business Person of the Year*

Back in 1986, George Lai started his operations renting an office space in the back of a friend's office and had a 40 foot refrigerated container as the cold storage facility with one truck for delivery. Today, his company employs nearly 80 workers and operates two office locations on Guam with over 100,000 square feet of space.

Despite the economic downturn that has affected Guam and the Pacific region, George added 37 employees within the last 6 years to meet the demands of his clients. His client base of one customer in 1986 has flourished to as much as 650 last year, including one important customer – the Department of Defense.

His ability to meet the challenges head on and the loyalty he has gained from his staff was demonstrated when the company won the Prime Vendor contract for the Department of Defense in early 2001. His keen insight to the needs of the customer was established when the Prime Vendor supplier had gone into bankruptcy and closed its operations. He sprang into action and was able to successfully start the Prime Vendor operation with no set backs. The operations continued to run smoothly despite the effects of September 11, cargo delays and other natural disasters that plagued the Guam region. The results were so impressive; the company garnered the prestigious “New Contractor of the Year” award in 2002 by the Defense Logistic Agency and the “Prime Vendor of the Year” award for 2003 – competing against other Prime Vendors in the Pacific Basin, including Hawaii, Alaska, Japan, Korea, Okinawa, and Singapore.

His leadership style is similar to most successful entrepreneurs...he allows his employees the opportunity to grown, contribute and prosper with the company. In doing so, the same values ensure that the company continues to deliver the best quality products and services to their customers. But beyond his business accomplishments, our winner takes the time to give back to his community that is now his home.

An active member of the Guam Visitor's Bureau and Guam Chamber of Commerce, he also serves as a board member with the Guam Hotel and Restaurant Association and Guam Environmental Agency, while serving as Vice President of the Chinese Merchants Association. He is the Chairperson of the Women's National Soccer Team and the Finance Chair for the Guam Football and Soccer Association. His company sponsors four soccer teams for children under the age of 12.

His generosity goes beyond his volunteered time. He donated several thousands of dollars of food and non-perishable items to typhoon victims in neighboring islands as well as donating to other charitable organizations to support the island school children.

SBA celebrates and recognizes the efforts of Guam's Small Business Person of the Year...Mr. George K. Lai, President and Owner of Quality Distributors, Inc.

